

THE STATUS REPORT

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Celebrating the Female Vote on August 26, Women's Equality Day

In 1971, due to the request of Rep. Bella Abzug (D-NY), the U.S. Congress designated August 26th as "Women's Equality Day." The date was selected to commemorate and celebrate the 1920 passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which granted women the right to vote. This was the result of an enormous, peaceful civil rights movement by women that had its official beginnings in 1848 at the world's first women's rights convention, in Seneca Falls, New York.

The observance of Women's Equality Day not only memorializes the passage of the 19th Amendment, but also calls attention to women's continuing efforts toward achieving full equality in all areas of their lives. Workplaces, libraries, organizations, and public facilities now participate in Women's Equality Day programs, displays, video showings, or other activities in order to celebrate and further promote women's equality.

Women of all ages are forever indebted to the innumerable women who persevered for decades to acquire the right for women to vote as equal citizens of our country. It is truly inspirational and astonishing that these women successfully organized, lobbied and rallied in large numbers, (and often with little notice) without e-mail, cell phones or fax machines in a "man's world!" We shudder to imagine the hardships, ridicule and persecution they must have suffered in order to stand up for women and their rights. Can you imagine what the world would be like today if our foremothers were fearful and did not secure women's right to vote?

Today, the struggle for women's equality continues on a slippery slope. For every step forward, it seems women take two steps backwards. There are still many people who don't believe women's equality is a current day issue. Moreover, it appears that many young women seem to take their rights for granted and don't understand that women's inequality does exist, and will continue to exist unless they pick up the torch our foremothers lit and continue fighting for the rights of women.

Challenges exist. A very small percentage of women, nationwide, participate in the political process. Many women cite a lack of time, lack of resources, complexity of issues, and the incorrect belief that their vote doesn't and won't count! However, once women are convinced that they already have the talents, skills and

experience to be successful in the political environment, we can accomplish great things.

The 100th anniversary of Women's Equality Day seems so far away. However, before 2020, we must consider all that has been accomplished and all that is left to be done. Will a woman be elected president? Will women finally enjoy full equality in all areas of their lives? If women participate, run for office and vote their numbers we can see all of this and more.

Honor Women's Equality Day by voting in this year's elections! The State Primaries are on September 19th, and the State Elections are on November 7th. Remember, the women in Massachusetts make up 52% of the population. **Can you imagine the changes women could make if they all voted?**

A special thank you to Marie Turley, Executive Director of the Boston Women's Commission for her contribution to this article.

Pictured right is **Alice Paul**, one of the leading figures responsible for the passage of the 19th Amendment (woman suffrage) to the U.S. Constitution. She was also instrumental in forming the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage, which evolved into the National Woman's Party in 1917. Her leadership was key to this organization's founding and future.



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Executive Director Corner

Women's Equality Day, August 26 (the anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, guaranteeing women's right to vote), came and went very quietly this year. As the day fell on a Saturday, the coalition of women's organizations that normally plan a commemoration chose to note the holiday by means other than a public gathering. Yet we would be remiss if we did not recognize and reflect on the day that continues to have vast relevance for women today.

The 19th Amendment, called the Susan B. Anthony Amendment, was the result of a successful and dynamic **72-year** political campaign, which culminated in the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1920. The amendment narrowly passed Congress in 1919 and was ratified by 36 states in 14 months. It received its last state approval in Tennessee by one vote, that of 25-year-old legislator Harry Burn, who switched from opposition to support after getting a telegram from his mother saying, "Hurrah, and vote for suffrage!" It was certified as part of the U.S. Constitution on August 26, 1920, a uniquely important day celebrated thereafter as Women's Equality Day.

This anniversary of the greatest single expansion of citizenship rights in the United States provides a remarkable opportunity both to honor the unrelenting tenacity and spirit of the multitude of women and men who worked to secure women's right to vote and also to illustrate how much can be achieved in a democratic society by the collective efforts of citizens committed to political reform.

It was the hope of our Foremothers who faced jail, hunger strikes, ridicule and fought and died for Woman Suffrage that future generations of women would use that hard-won vote to make this a better world and to fight for full equality and justice for women. And they have. But what would Susan B. Anthony, Carrie Chapman Catt, Lucy Stone and others think if they learned that in the 2000 election, 36 million women who were eligible to vote didn't. Of these, 11 million did not even register to vote. In the same year, 15 million young women, between the ages of 18 and 34, did not vote. And single, unmarried women represent the largest block of unregistered, nonvoting US residents.

Women have the power to change this state, our country and indeed the world - all they have to do is seize the hard-won right that is theirs and step into the voting booth. Until more women exercise their right to vote, and elect other women to positions of power and influence, the changes that need to be made for women will not occur. For instance, Massachusetts has never elected a woman to the US Senate. No woman has served in the US Congress in over 20 years and the state legislature is only 25 percent female.

This fall many women are doing their part to create change by running for state and local offices. Won't you do yours by using your vote? While it is too late to register to vote for the state primary on September 19, there is still time to register to vote in the November election. To do so would make our foremothers proud!



Title IX and the Status of Women; *Women's Equality Threatened Again!*

Thirty years ago, one little law, which is a section of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title IX made positive changes for women and their status in the locker room, classroom, and, ultimately, in the workplace setting. Title IX guarantees equal opportunities for girls and women in all federally funded education and sports organizations. Now it's in danger and we need to do something about it!

A disturbing new loophole in the law makes it easier than ever for schools to get away with not providing equal opportunities for women. All women and girls need to understand what's at risk because even if you're not an athlete, you can be certain that Title IX has had an effect on your life. During your school years you were guaranteed, along with every other girl who was interested, a place in math and science classes, even if a teacher felt you wouldn't go far in the field. Title IX made it against the law for schools (elementary through graduate) to discriminate on the basis of sex under any circumstances.

In March 2005, the Department of Education quietly issued a "clarification" (Title IX supporters call it a loophole) that has a lot of people worried as it shifts the burden of compliance from schools to female athletes. It has to do with one of the ways a school can show it's complying with Title IX; a burden has been placed on female students in that they have to prove their interest in a particular sport before a school has to enforce Title IX by creating a team. In other words, the "clarification" enables schools to just fire off an e-mail survey to its students. If no one says they want, say, a women's soccer team, then the school doesn't have to add one. Question is, are girls who have never been exposed to soccer going to have an excitement for it already? And if they do, will they take the time to respond at all?

The good news is word of the e-mail survey option spread quickly and as a result dozens of women's groups including the YWCA, American Federation of Teachers and the National Women's Law Center have acknowledged it

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as a threat to Title IX. A *Save Title IX* coalition was born and, in addition to supporting a bipartisan Congressional resolution calling on the Department of Education to withdraw the clarification, began letter-writing campaigns. Their efforts have paid off as no schools have yet adopted the e-mail option. However the Department of Education has not withdrawn the clarification.

According to the Women's Sports Foundation, as many as 80 percent of schools aren't complying with Title IX, which operates on the honor system. Unfortunately, lack of enforcement is still the norm today. For the most part, the government looks into possible violations only if it receives a complaint.

Once again, women's equality is threatened. If the government does not withdraw its clarification of Title IX, women nationwide risk taking a few steps backwards in their fight for equality. If you would like more information about the Save Title IX campaign, or learn how you can help, please visit the National Women's Law Center www.nwlc.com, Save Title IX www.savetitleix.com, and/or the Women's Sports Foundation www.womenssportsfoundation.org Web sites.

Did You Know...

Each Night in Massachusetts, over 20,000 Children are Without Homes!?

You can help end family homelessness by making your amazon.com purchases through the Homes for Families' Web site. The process is very simple; go to the Homes for Families' Web site, www.homesforfamilies.org and click on the amazon.com link. Then shop! When you do, amazon.com will donate 5% of your total purchase to Homes for Families. It will not cost you anything extra! Homes for Families have a year-round partnership with amazon.com. Happy shopping!!



**SAVE THE DATE!!
MARK YOUR CALENDAR
MORE DETAILS
COMING IN NEXT
MONTH'S ISSUE OF THE
STATUS REPORT**



MCSW Will Launch its MWRRN on October 12, 2006!!

**Make sure your organization is represented in the
MASSACHUSETTS WOMEN'S RESOURCE & REFERRAL
NETWORK**

The network is an interactive online database that will put information, services, agencies, and organizations that Massachusetts women and their families need at their fingertips! We need your help in identifying local service providers and women's organizations to include in the network.

Enter your organizations information directly at
www.mass.gov/women/addmyorg.htm
or call us at 617-626-6520

Commission Corner

The MCSW is now Accepting Commissioner Applications

To be considered for appointment by any of the four MCSW Appointing Authorities please submit a completed application form annually between August 15 and September 30. Appointments are typically made in November. Applications can be downloaded from the MCSW Web site, go to: www.mass.gov/women. Or you may call the MCSW office at (617) 626-6520 to request an application be mailed to you.

Please mail the completed form to: The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, Charles F. Hurley Building, 19 Staniford Street, 6th floor, Boston, MA, 02114. Please note, while the "official" application submittal timeline is August 15 - September 30, the MCSW does welcome and accept applications year-round.

MCSW Speakers Bureau Offers Expert Speakers on a Wide Variety of Women's Issues

Do you need an outstanding speaker on women's issues to address your next meeting or event? Contact the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women's Speaker's Bureau. The mission of the MCSW Speaker's Bureau is to inform and educate the women of Massachusetts, raise awareness of women's issues, and strive for positive change for women in the Commonwealth. This free resource features nearly 20 dynamic and expert Commissioners and staff of diverse professional, ethnic and geographical backgrounds, who are available to speak on a variety of topics that impact women.

Commissioners can speak to issues of concern to the MCSW, such as the status of women in MA, health care, education, violence, immigration, pay equity, aging and women's rights and more.

Previous speaking engagements have included: the AAUW Spring Conference, Women Leaders in Higher Education, Sturbridge Women in Business, Worcester National Pay Equity Day, Holy Cross Women's and Gender Studies Awards Ceremony, the Peabody Chamber of Commerce's Mary Upton Ferrin Women's Award Breakfast, the Older Women's League of Boston, the Berkshire and Merrimack County Chamber of Commerce.

The MCSW will work with your organization to tailor its presentation to your needs. While speakers are free of charge, tax-deductible donations to the MCSW are always welcomed to help subsidize MCSW's operating and special project expenses.

For more information, or to electronically request a speaker, visit our Web site at www.mass.gov/women/speakersbureau/speakersbureau.htm. Or if you prefer, you can e-mail your request to mcsw@state.ma.us or call the MCSW office at (617) 626-6520.

MCSW Summer Interns Say Goodbye, While the Search for Fall Interns Begins

As the season nears its end the Commission says goodbye and wishes the best to our seven departing summer interns. It was truly a pleasure to have them as part of our team and we are very grateful for their many contributions. During their tenure at the MCSW some of the major projects completed included:

- A collaboration with the National Association of Women's Commissions to produce "A Handbook for New Commissions"
- "The Status of Women and Girls in Massachusetts Counties," a county by county report of the status of women
- An updating of the MCSW's "How to get appointed to Boards and Commissions: A Directory"
- A cost analysis report of the potential health care saving that would be achieved if the state adopted mandated health education for public schools
- Preliminary research on the issue of pay equity in Massachusetts

We are currently accepting applications for the MCSW fall internship program. To apply, or for additional information, please e-mail Jill Ashton, Outreach Coordinator @ Jill.Ashton@state.ma.us

Local Women's Commission News

Berkshire Commission Has a North/South County Opening

The Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women (BCCSW) is seeking a qualified and interested woman of North or South County to serve as a Commissioner on the nine-member board. A resident of North or South County must fill this seat. Service on the Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women is an opportunity to affect positive change for women and girls in Berkshire County.

The Commission is comprised of 9 appointed women who have had prior experience working towards the improvement of the status of women. Commissioners are drawn from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, age, sexual orientation, and socio-economic backgrounds from throughout Berkshire County.

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, which has appointing authority for the BCCSW, is now accepting applications to fill the North or South County vacancy. The MCSW encourages all who are interested to apply. Applications should be submitted to the MCSW office by September 15, 2006. Applications are available for download at www.mass.gov/women or contact the Commission office at 617-626-6520 to request a paper application.

The Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women was legislatively created in 2004 establishing a board of nine commissioners to hear input, collect data and propose solutions for concerns of Berkshire women.

Women of the Year Sought By Brockton Women's Commission

Each year, the Brockton Women's Commission honors women who have made a significant contribution to the Brockton community within the previous year. The significant contribution could have been made through her government, civil, professional, religious, or school activities. Women being nominated must be a Brockton resident age 18 or older. Deadline for nominations is Tuesday, September 12, 2006.

Those who are selected to be the 2006 Brockton Women of the Year will be honored at a breakfast on Saturday, October 14, 2006 from 9-11a.m. at Massasoit Community College Conference Center. Tickets must be purchased in advance by Friday, October 6, 2006. Adult tickets cost \$15 and children under 12 cost \$10.

The Brockton Commission on Women's Issues was established in 1993 with the purpose of acting as a central force in the city and the community. The Commission concerns itself with women's issues, providing information, referral, guidance and coordination.

For more information about the Brockton Women of the Year Awards or the Brockton Commission on Women's Issues contact Chair Katie Stanton at (508) 584-4315 x204 or visit their Web site at

www.brocktonwomenscommission.com To get a nomination form, which you will be able to download, visit www.mass.gov/women/calendar/upcoming.htm



The banner features a green logo on the left with a silhouette of the Massachusetts State House dome and the text "THE MASSACHUSETTS CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN". To the right, the text "WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6TH 2006" and "BOSTON CONVENTION & EXHIBITION CENTER" is displayed in white. Below this, "2006 Keynote Speaker" is written in yellow, followed by "Maya Angelou" in large blue letters. A small photograph of Maya Angelou is on the right side of the banner.

**Save the Date! Wednesday, December 6, 2006,
The 2nd Annual Massachusetts Conference for Women**

The MCSW is pleased to once again be the lead partner on the second annual MA Conference for Women, to be held at the Boston Exhibition and Convention Center. This one-day event will feature more than 75 diverse and nationally recognized speakers leading seminars on topics such as health, personal finance, education, and more. Conference attendees, expected to outnumber 5,000 this year, will enjoy even more networking, education and inspiration. **Online registration is now available at**

www.maconferenceforwomen.org

Other Noteworthy News

The Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators Seeks an Executive Director

The Women's Caucus is a bi-partisan, bicameral group of female legislators serving in the Massachusetts Legislature. The executive director reports directly to the Co-Chairs of the Caucus but should be able to work independently. **The deadline to submit application materials is Friday, September 8, 2006.** For more information about this position and how to apply, visit www.mawomen.org or www.mass.gov/women. **No phone calls please.**

Women Veterans' Network Seeking Nominations for Outstanding Women Veterans

The contributions of Massachusetts' women in the military will be honored this Veterans' Day week at the "Women are Veterans Too" ceremony, which will be held on Wednesday, November 8th at 10:30 a.m. in the State House's Nurses Hall. This second annual event will feature presentations by women veterans and their supporters, as well as special recognition of an outstanding woman veteran.

Please nominate a special woman for the "Outstanding Woman Veteran Award." Nominees must currently or previously have served active duty in the regular military, National Guard or Reserve. Nominations must include: an overview of military service and awards; a summary of contributions to the military; and any personal sacrifices or hardships the woman endured in order to serve in the military. For an official nomination form, please visit www.mass.gov/veterans, www.mass.gov/women/calendar/upcoming.htm or call 617-210-5781.

Nominations are due no later than September 29, 2006, and should be mailed to the Women Veterans' Network, 600 Washington St., Suite 1100, Boston, MA 02111, or faxed to 617-210-5755, or e-mailed to DVSWomen@vet.state.ma.us.

The Massachusetts Interagency Council on Housing & Homelessness Invites You to a Community Forum to Discuss:

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts's State Plan to end Family Homelessness:

A Report of the Policy Academy on Family Homelessness

There are six community forums scheduled and they are hosted by One Family Inc. Representatives of the Interagency Council and the Policy Academy will be present at each forum to share progress to date, solicit feedback and discuss how to get involved in regional implementation of the plan.

To read a copy of the plan or to obtain detailed information about the forums, visit www.onefamilyinc.org or call One Family Inc. at (617) 423-0504

MCSW E-MAIL ACTION ALERTS

Would you like to be notified of
MCSW's upcoming events, Calls to Action or Other News?
If so, join our e-Action Alert by
sending an e-mail to: join-mcsw-action-alert@listserv.state.ma.us

Upcoming Noteworthy Events & Happenings

September 19, 2006 → State Primary Elections

September 29, 2006 → Last Day to Nominate an Outstanding Women Veteran

September 30, 2006 → The Money Conference for Women

For more info, go to: www.themoneyconferenceforwomen.org

October 7, 2006 → Oprah comes to Boston

For more information visit: www.omagazine.info/oyou2/

October 12, 2006 → MCSW Launches its Massachusetts Women's Resource & Referral Network
(An online Web site) To be held at the MA State House - Grand Staircase - 11:00 am

October 14, 2006 → Brockton Women of the Year Awards Breakfast

For more information visit: www.brocktonwomenscommission.com

October 16, 2006 → 10th Annual Conference on Women's Health & the Environment

For more information visit: www.reginavilla.com/heinz2006.html

October 18, 2006 → Last Day to Register to Vote and/or Change Your Party Enrollment Preference

November 8, 2006 → 2nd Annual Women are Veterans Too! Event @ the MA State House, Nurses Hall

December 6, 2006 → Massachusetts Conference for Women (Registration is now open!)

For more information visit: www.maconferenceforwomen.org

For a complete listing of events please visit www.mass.gov/women/upcoming.htm



If you have an event that you would like added to our future newsletters, or Web site, please e-mail the information to:
Paula.Daddona@state.ma.us

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

VISIT US AT:

WWW.MASS.GOV/WOMEN

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